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LUCIE'S DIARY

OF THE

SIEGE OF STRASBOURG.

BY

A YOUNG LADY OF ALSACE.



WITH A FRONTISPIECE.

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE.

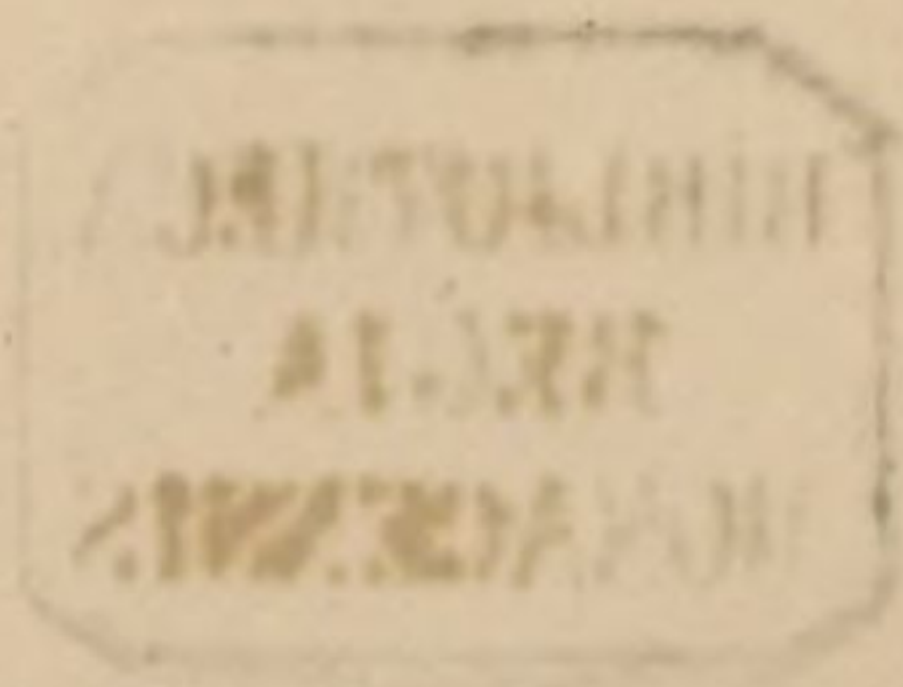
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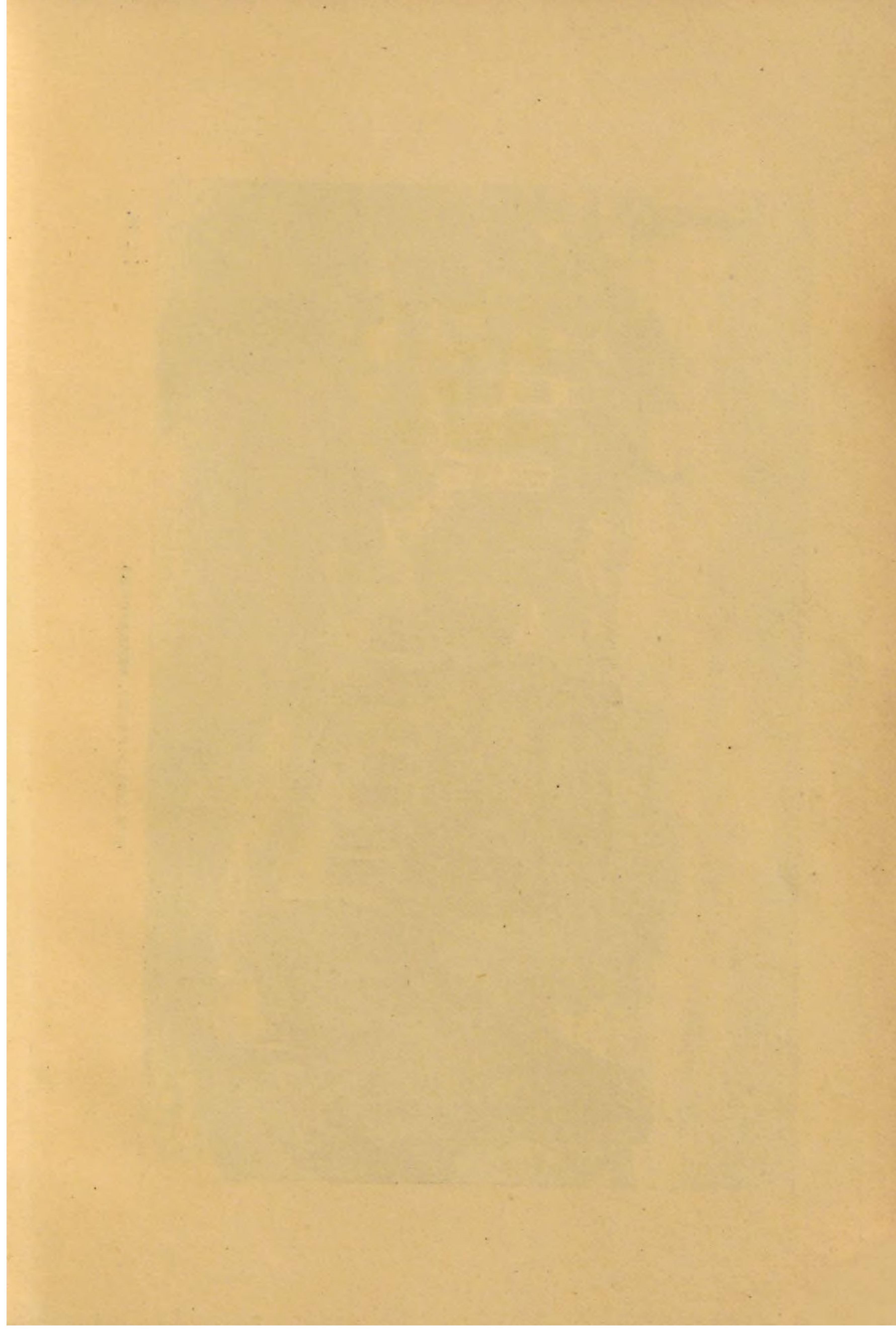
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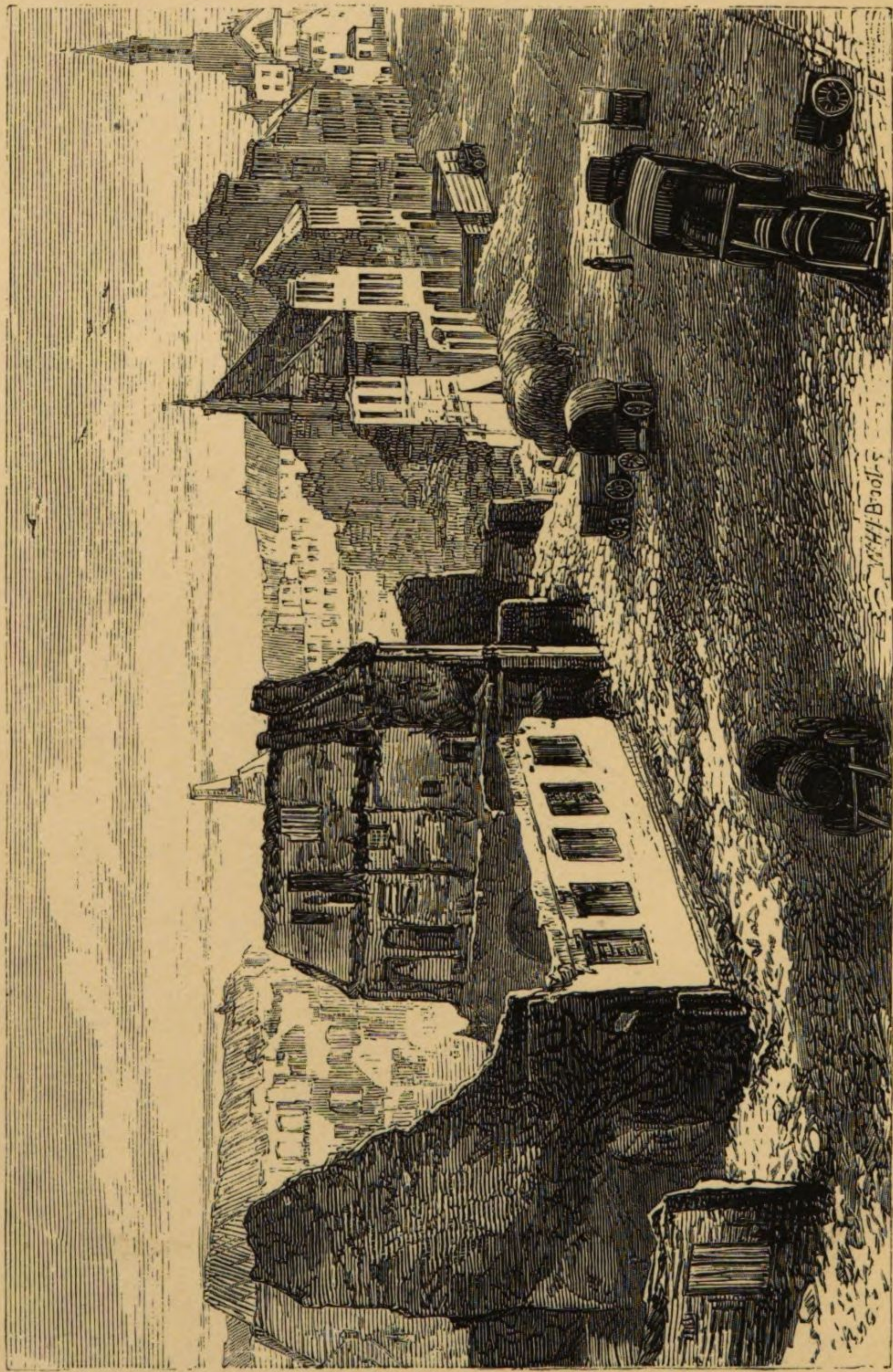


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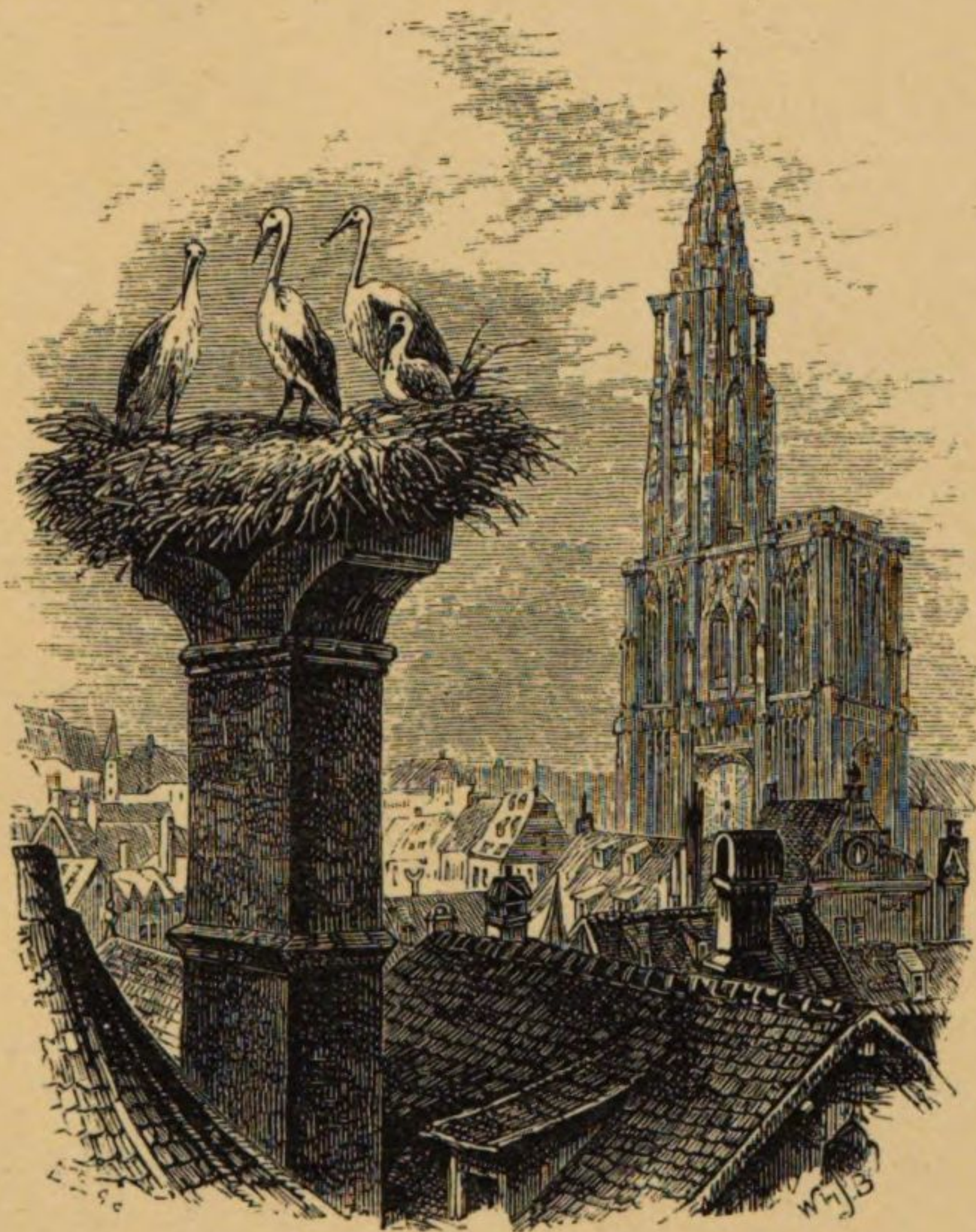
STORY OF STRASBOURG





RUE DES PIERRES, STRASBOURG.

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"Remember me, O my God, for good!"
Neh. xiii. 31.

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1871.

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LUCIE'S DIARY
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July the 25th, 1870.

THE war-cry is raised! Everybody is full of excitement and anticipation. At every corner of our streets you see animated groups discussing with loud voices the current topics of the day, or speculating on our successes in arms. Glorious deeds and heroic achievements of our army in all times are related over and over again by our veteran troopers, much to the delight and benefit of more youthful soldiers, to whom the war at hand seems to be the goal of all their wishes and earthly bliss. However, amongst the townspeople a subdued air prevails, for which I cannot as yet

account. In our little home things go on pleasantly, as before. Grandmother is a shade calmer, and still more silent than it is her wont. I watch her often sitting in the bay-window, busy with her knitting, or bending over the large family Bible, open on the little table before her. Sometimes I fancy tears are dimming her spectacles: it may be that reminiscences of her youth, which had lain buried deep in her heart for half a century, have again risen to the surface. I remember that she spoke once or twice to Aline of her early trials, which reach as far back as the battle of Leipsic, and are in some way mixed up with the rout of *la grande armée*. I cannot guess what it may be. Of course Aline knows all about it: Aline is her pet, as she is mine and uncle Jean's, in fact, everybody's who has ever looked into her deep loving eyes, and has seen her smile—a smile of such tenderness, and so beautiful, so like grandmother's.

July the 26th, 1870.

We had such a delightful walk this afternoon—uncle Jean took us to the Citadel. On our way there we met a large body of Turcos. It

was a fine sight. They are all, without exception, splendid fellows, tall, slightly built, with finely-made limbs; their hands and feet are so small and so well-shaped, more like those of a woman than of men. Besides, they look so smart in their gorgeous array, which is set off to great advantage by their dark skin and flashing eyes. I thought they were too much *à quatre épingles* to be quite unconscious of their good looks. I whispered my remarks to uncle Jean, who was walking by my side. He was highly amused, laughed and teased me, speaking in a rambling sort of way of strong-minded young ladies, who shiver at the very possibility of one Turco invading their dining-rooms, or taking them in to dinner. All this was aimed at me for my having felt some apprehension the other day when he brought a Turco to dine with us. However, our guest's behaviour was so gentleman-like that before dessert came in we were already fast friends, Charlemagne and I. Isn't it an odd name for a nut-brown sub-lieutenant? I am sure people must soon get reconciled to the savage appearance of our brave Turcos, in spite of their cat-like nimbleness, which at first keeps one pretty sharp on the look-out for what they are doing, or,

rather, for the unheard-of thing they will be doing next. Uncle Jean says, though very fierce in battle, the Turcos are easily managed; the strictest discipline reigns amongst them, and they worship their officers, who generally treat them with great kindness, just as they would deal with a set of great children: and such they are, indeed, with their broken French and funny habit of calling everybody papa or mamma. It is late now. The day is gone, with its brightness and glory: the bustle of the town has subsided into quiet. I have been looking out of my window, watching the moon rising slowly over the zig-zag line of gables. I pictured to myself the sunlit plain beyond the gates, with its shifting shadows, where, under the cover of their white tents, the dark sons of Africa are now seeking rest on a foreign soil. What strange scenes of home-life in their far-off country must be flitting through their dreams! Poor fellows! how many or how few of them will ever return to their sunny land?

July the 27th, 1870.

"Coming events cast their shadows before them," is a saying often quoted by grandmother: however dark those shadows may be, I am fully aware that they do not affect in the least her tranquil mind and calm ways. Do we all become passive or indifferent when we grow old? Should I be less sensitive to the gloom now hanging over our town supposing I were sixty or seventy instead of nearly seventeen? Or—and there is the puzzle—is grandmother really regardless of what may happen around her? is she never afraid of outward circumstances which may be fraught with anxiety and possible dangers? I cannot admit indifference in one so loving and so good. Are not all of us concerned in the coming struggle? and every one of us is dear to her. What, then, gives her such control over her feelings, and makes her so unlike any one else? I well know how Aline grieves at this unexpected turn of affairs. Of course it is for Maurice's sake; but then she pours out the anxiety of her heart in endless long letters, and thus gives vent to her feelings. Lately I have been left much to myself. I go often to the

kitchen and listen in silent horror to Marguerite's tales of battle-fields and slaughter. She relates awful things in a pathetic way of her own. I well remember all her favourite ghost-stories, to which I used to listen when a child with feelings of mingled eagerness and horror; and, though I am no longer easily frightened, I felt so nervous yesterday evening that I left her to finish her sentence to herself, and hastened back to grandmother's sitting-room, where I only felt secure after uncle Jean had come home. He immediately saw that something was amiss, and, to my great confusion, I had to tell him all. Dear uncle Jean tried to laugh me out of my fears, but there are lines of care only too visible on his face; and, in spite of his endeavours to give me some courage, I cannot help trembling at the thought of bloodshed and battle-fields. Have we no possibility left of averting such calamity? Then may God help us!

July the 29th, 1870.

We are very busy indeed. There is a general cleaning over the whole house, and a running to

and from to get stores in as quickly as possible. Our garrison will be strengthened, and consequently the price of food will rise. Long and secret conferences are now held every morning either in the larder or in the store-room. Marguerite looks very important when the council is over, and she generally marches off to the market, and when she comes back she never condescends to show me her purchases, as she did formerly, and quite forgets to lecture me on household duties; the chief of which, to her mind, is to strike a wonderful bargain. Dear old Marguerite, she has sadly spoiled me; and though she still frowns at any one who dares to put me to rights, she herself never misses an opportunity to point out to me how useless a creature I am in our house. What a blessing Aline is to everybody, being not only clever, but also handy in all kinds of work. To-day, seeing her so busy, I thought it a good opportunity of showing my willingness to become more useful; but to my great dismay I was not even allowed to approach her sanctuary, where she was unpacking mysterious parcels sent in from various shops. I went back to grandmother, who received me more graciously; and I have been helping her all day

to sort huge piles of linen, of which parcels are put aside to give away to our soldiers. Thus the hours slip through my fingers, as fast as the beads through the shaking fingers of the old beggar-woman, who since time immemorial is sitting on the worn stone steps of our cathedral. Age and habit, and the antique quaintness of her figure, have made her a part of the building. . . . I am glad to have so much to do just now, employment always keeps up my spirits, which (I must confess) have been at low ebb of late. When I feel very tired, I go to sleep directly, without first racking my brains with too much thinking. My diary must be kept faithfully, whatever may happen. It is uncle Jean's gift at my last birthday. "It is a wholesome thing to shape one's own thoughts in some record," said he, when handing to me my pretty book; and I promised to write down all my joys and troubles, everything of interest which comes across my path. A promise is a sacred engagement, which I mean to fulfil, even if there were nothing else worth notice besides new-laid eggs, ham, and preserves, and cart-loads of vegetables innumerable. I wonder who is to eat up all these things, and why are they got in such a

haste? I must coax Marguerite to tell me more about things. There is enough writing for to-night. I must be off to bed. Aline is praying still: her prayers are so much longer now.

July the 31st, 1870.

Nothing worth mentioning occurred to-day. Yesterday my diary went clean out of my head. I believe that I behaved in a most foolish manner. What was it all about? How did it happen? What does it mean? I cannot make it out; however, I will try to recollect. In the morning, grandmother thought I was looking pale, and urged Aline and me to take a walk in the afternoon. She herself could not accompany us. After five we both sallied forth into the Porte des Pêcheurs. It was one of those still, delicious summer days, rather hot, but not sultry, with a darkish blue sky all overhead. We soon left the dusty road, and turning to the left we entered a shady lane, full of singing birds. Now and then a withered leaf fell rustling on the grass, or remained hanging on the shrubs, like a solitary butterfly. We went on chatting gaily. Nothing can be more

delightful than a chat with Aline; besides the enjoyment at the time present, I like afterwards to ponder over her pretty sayings. Aline, like grandmother, is naturally silent; but once fairly roused, her sweet thoughts and striking remarks are poured forth like a streamlet at springtide, full of melody, with plenty of flowers sprouting everywhere. I always feel after such a conversation an earnest desire to become truly better; sometimes I fancy that I have already improved merely by paying attention to my sweet instructress. So I told grandmother the other day. At first she smiled at her enthusiastic Pussie, as she sometimes calls me, but after a pause, she added, "Well, Lucie, this is very nice and good, even praiseworthy; but, dearest, in loving your sister so well, never forget the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother or a sister." These words came rushing through my mind like a warning, while we were walking down the broad avenue with the sunshine dancing before us. I felt vividly at that moment the truth which dawned so slowly and so painfully upon my comprehension, that *nothing* is all ours on this side heaven. My laughter was instantly checked, my joyous mood

vanished altogether, and when we reached home, I had turned as grave and triste as a rainy November day. I went straight to grandmother's sitting-room, to arrange some wild flowers in her vase. I found her deeply engaged in earnest conversation with uncle Jean, whom I believed to be still out of town. I did not expect him back for the next few days, and gave such a start, all my blood rushed to my heart, and I turned very pale. He must have seen it, for he got up directly, and taking my upturned face in both his hands, he asked me, rather sternly, "What do those black rings mean round these big dark eyes? Are we taking now to Eastern fashions?" I really could not help it,—in a twinkling, large tears rolled down my cheeks. "Mother," said uncle Jean, in an altered tone, "the child is crying in all earnest. What is the matter with her? I have not seen her shedding tears since her babyhood till now. . . ." Grandmother suggested that I must be overtired, and advised me to lie down for a little while; uncle Jean, however, prevented my escape, taking hold of both my hands. He made me sit down on the window-sill, and spoke to me long, with such softness in his voice, as if he wanted to make

amends for my foolish tears. I could scarcely follow all he said, I felt still so bewildered. One thing is clear to me, he is striving hard to impart to me the confidence which he lacks himself. "Sad events may soon be closing around us," added he, after several vain attempts to proceed in his speech; "we must meet them with courage and fortitude. I know that my fair maiden can, when she chooses; she is not the little goose she looks." "Will there be a siege?" asked I, almost breathless. Uncle Jean remained silent. Just then Aline entered the room, and for her sake I did not venture to press this ominous question any further. Poor Aline! What a sad blow for her to be shut in, and Maurice far away. How will she bear it? I felt down-hearted the whole evening. At bed-time I went to grandmother; she always understands my doubts and shortcomings. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," said she; and with this text on my mind I fell asleep.

August the 1st, 1870.

Another day has passed. No news of importance. It is the lull before the gathering storm.

The bulk of our army is massing along our north-eastern frontiers, under the command of Maréchal Bazaine ; another corps d'armée is marching to the front, under MacMahon. People assume now great confidence. There is no doubt as to our success, with such soldiers as our heroes of the Crimean war, of Solferino, and Mexico. I do not understand much about it ; I only quote public opinion. For my own part, I would rather have peace at any price, and I pity with all my heart our dear friends at Forbach. It is generally believed that an attack is imminent near that town. The very thought of a possible conflict in our immediate neighbourhood makes me shudder. When I was a child I dreaded above everything the report of fire-arms. The sight of a gun or a pistol would put me to flight. When I was a child ? . . . Is this quite correct ? I who still shrink from a parading sentry, and jump when the butt-end of a rifle comes down clattering on the pavement ? Perhaps because of this very weakness of mine, I feel such unbounded admiration for the small number of great women whose memories live in popular tradition, or stand out in the records of history with the radiancy of jewels, when all others are lost in the

dusk of past ages. I delight in reading their biographies; which, however, never satisfy the craving of my mind, as there are seldom any disclosures to be found which could give a full insight as to their home-life, their thoughts, and predilections. I wonder whether they were once girls like Aline and me, with girlish habits and fancies, with the same natural dislike to horrible sights, and the same shrinking from anything which indicates pain and suffering? Or have they been roughed in their early maidenhood by coarser surroundings, and shaped into heroines from their very cradles?

August the 2nd, 1870.

I have a great deal to write this evening. I scarcely know where to begin and where to end. Such an unexpected event! . . . Maurice is here! He arrived this morning and took us all by surprise. Though Aline had received his last letter the day before yesterday, none of us knew or even suspected he was coming. Of course it is a great happiness to us all—how much so to her who loves him far better than either of us ever can? Aline has not been quite so well of late, and I believe

grandmother felt some uneasiness on her behalf. Since Maurice has entered the house new life seems to flow through her pale cheeks ; she is looking prettier every hour, and, to my fancy, more and more like a white lily, with the soft glow of a blush now and then overspreading her features and enhancing the brightness of her star-like eyes. It is but too visible how proud Maurice is of our sweet beauty. In the evening uncle René called to welcome Maurice back, and when supper was over our three gentlemen began to discuss public affairs, which begin to wear an ugly look. Maurice is full of news. There are the most contradictory reports in circulation as to the real state of affairs in our beloved country. Uncle Jean's opinion is that to declare war at present is the most reckless piece of business, and he would not like to have the responsibility of it. Besides the war with the outside, we are threatened within with troubles of quite a different sort. Maurice tells what horrible rumours have been afloat for some time, of which we have been quite ignorant here—rumours of internal divisions, of a kind of conspiracy against us Protestants. Hence nothing on earth could induce Maurice to stay away from Strasbourg this

autumn, as had been previously arranged. Grandmother's only remark on this subject was, "Heaven forbid such a dire calamity!" and at the close of our family prayers Aline played the harmonium, and we all sang with quivering lips Luther's well-known hymn,—

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.

August the 4th, 1870.

Those last two days of quiet happiness have been sadly disturbed by the tidings of a skirmish which took place between the outposts of the belligerent armies. The French have taken the offensive and threaten to overrun the district of Saarbruck, and a battle is imminent on the whole line between Forbach and Wissembourg. May God grant us the victory! May He take pity on the slain and wounded, to whatever country they belong! Do those who are in power and are called the great of this world, and to whose keeping the sheathed sword is entrusted—do they ever count beforehand the cost of battles? Or have the lives of so many thousands no weight in their scales, nor the anguish and tears of mothers, sisters,

brides? . . . And how is it that, with our modern civilization, together with the softening influences of Christianity, war is still possible in the year of grace 1870?

Regiment after regiment passed the whole day before our house. There is an incessant beating of drums, shouting of drunken warriors, cheering of the mob who follow up the rear to the railway station. The whole town is full of din and clamour, and its life seems changed into a great turmoil. What is most distasteful to my feelings is the playing of the bands which head the departing soldiers. The livelier the tune the more grating to my ears. I should like best to bury my aching brow in my pillows to keep out the dismal noise. Although it is long past midnight, strains of distant music are now and then breaking the stillness of the night. Will it continue the same to-morrow? And afterwards, what then? . . . Be still, my fluttering heart, to-morrow is the Lord's.

August the 5th, 1870.

Strasbourg is plunged in deep consternation. The news of a battle and a defeat reached us in

the middle of the night. There is as much disbelief as terror painted on the faces of the idlers in the streets. Uncle René called early this morning to tell grandmother all he knew. He was on his way to the Préfecture, where the officers of the garde nationale sédentaire are compelled to meet for instructions. He says all the men are very deficient, and want drilling sadly; the larger number do not even know how to handle their guns. I must go and see Marie and her darlings one of these days. She will be often alone now when uncle René is on duty. Uncle Jean went to his club, hoping to get a truthful account of what has happened. I wish he had come back. I cannot longer sit still. There is the door-bell! I must be off. . . .

Uncle Jean brought home the full particulars of the battle which was lost yesterday. They are painfully interesting. We remained together after tea, but there was scarcely any talk. Maurice tried but failed. Uncle Jean tried also, but, after some faint attempts at conversation, he gave it up and buried himself in the perusal of the *Journal des Débats*. The blow is too sudden, too unexpected. Nothing had intimated that such a reverse

was in store for us. I am mourning for our brave Turcos, who fought so valiantly and struggled so long for the defence of their batteries on the Geisberg. Alas! they were out-numbered, and sadly cut off from all reinforcements. Many are dead, a large number are wounded, some are captives. General Abel Douay fell like a hero, and the day's bloody work was the loss of Wissembourg. But everybody thinks it was an accident, and the belief gains ground that our soldiers had no idea of the force to which they were opposed when they tried to repulse the attack. . . .

August the 6th, 1870.

I went out this afternoon. The town is still full of soldiers, but there is no longer any appearance of bustle and excitement. The noise has died away under the appalling blow of yesterday. Crowds of officers are sitting outside the cafés as usual, lounging, smoking and chatting—all wearing a pacific and unexpectant air truly disheartening, if one considers that twenty-four hours ago their brethren in arms have suffered a bloody check not easily forgotten. It is rumoured that a battle

of greater importance is now raging between the retreating soldiers, who endeavour to make a spirited stand against the overwhelming number of our foes. Waggon, full of wounded, drive at a slow pace through our streets. Poor fellows!

August the 7th, 1870.

What a night of anxiety closed upon an evening full of terror. A heavy cannonading had been heard the whole of yesterday. At nightfall the first fugitives entered the city. All the inhabitants had turned out into the streets. The tumult was beyond description. Bells began to toll from every steeple, and from one end of the town to the other rang the one fearful cry, "MacMahon is defeated, our army is put to flight." Soon there were seen soldiers with bare heads, covered with blood and dirt, wearied with a protracted struggle, famished with hunger, dying of thirst, beaten and humbled. What a sad spectacle! the prelude of a more heart-rending sight, which has been going on since daybreak. Uncle Jean and Maurice left us after midnight to go to the field of battle in search of the wounded. They took an omnibus with two

horses. The vehicle was overladen with medical stores, linen, provisions of all kinds. When they had started we re-entered our house and knelt down to pray. Grandmother read the ninety-first Psalm, and when she had done reading she repeated once more, "He shall give His angels charge over thee." What a comfort are these blessed words. I grew quite calm, and afterwards went to sleep on the sofa, in grandmother's room. . . .

The merry peal of church-bells roused me from my slumbers. At first I could not realize how it happened that I had been sleeping downstairs, and so long. Grandmother and Aline were already at breakfast. But the reality soon dawned upon my mind, and with a sad heart I hurried on my clothes to be in time for church. Never knew I a more solemn Sunday in all my life. On our way we met long strings of waggons filled with wounded, followed by hundreds of soldiers who, less grievously hurt, had not had the chance of a ride ; men with pale faces, their uncovered heads bound up in blood-stained kerchiefs, or painfully walking with broken limbs, supported by their comrades, all soiled and miserable-looking. So

precipitate was the flight that before darkness set in the greater part of the routed wing of MacMahon's army had been pouring through the gates to seek refuge behind our ramparts : a pell-mell of soldiers of all arms, a medley of cavalry and infantry, all burning for revenge. At seven o'clock a panic seized upon all citizens, for the news spread like wildfire that the enemy was fast approaching the town. There was a rush to the arsenal for arms. The drawbridges were pulled up, and for the first time we passed the night expecting to hear the thunder of cannons, and everybody understood that the siege of Strasbourg will be the immediate consequence of the disaster of Woerth. Maurice and uncle Jean have not come back : we earnestly pray for their speedy return.

August the 8th, 1870.

This afternoon I went to see Marie. How awful to be a wife and mother in such terrible times ! Marie is so sweet and full of gentleness ; she is looking more like a child herself than a matron with four chubby little boys. Grandmother is very fond of her, I believe as much for

her own sake as for uncle René's, who is grandmother's youngest and favourite son. Marie was much pleased to see me, and was glad of my offer to help her. Her personal troubles have already begun. "I am always ahead in such matters," said she, with a smile, when she told me how cook had gone at an hour's notice. Cook is a German, and was in great haste to recross the Rhine. Since yesterday a great many people have left town for a safer shelter. Nurse took charge of the little boys soon after dinner, and Marie and I began to make a survey of her treasures. We packed up the plate, Marie's jewels, some documents, and a variety of precious little things. René was much amused at our proceedings, but vehemently protested against the removal of the plate. Whatever horrible things were going to happen, he did not intend to eat his dinners with something like a pitchfork, remonstrated he in downright earnest. Marie stopped him with a kiss, and, of course, she had her own way. I believe a gentle wife always gets the better of her husband. I wonder how uncle Jean would act in such an emergency, supposing he were married. I am afraid he would not yield so easily as uncle

René does. When we had done with the packing, we went down to the cellar in search of a proper hiding-place. It was rather fun. I headed the procession with a lantern, uncle René followed, carrying the precious box on his shoulder, Marie closed the rear with a spade. All the time uncle René sneered at the Prussians, who will be likely to come in search of Marie's necklaces and other *brimborions*, as he spitefully called them, in the secluded spot of the potato-corner.

August the 9th, 1870.

At last uncle Jean and Maurice have returned from their painful mission. Our poor soldiers have been badly beaten. Uncle Jean furnished my diary with a few notes he has made while traversing the battle-field. About fifty miles from Strasbourg, on both sides of the route impériale, they came in sight of the first tokens of the severe combat of the day before. The fields were all trampled under foot for miles, literally strewn with knapsacks, boots, shakos, and broken chassepots. Here and there lay a dead horse, which had died

of exhaustion during the wild speed of a tremendous gallop. Now and then the road was blocked up with overturned baggage-cars and broken vehicles of every denomination. Further down they met with the first burial-parties busy in the field with their gloomy work. Then more traces of the fierce struggle; heaps of dead men, French and Germans lying side by side in their last sleep, and dead horses, horribly mangled by shot and shell. About sixty carts were driving in every direction, all filled with wounded, who had been picked up amongst the slain. The heat in the middle of the day had become intolerable. To ease their tired horses, uncle Jean and Maurice began to walk up the hills. They reached Reichshoffen late in the evening, where their help was much needed. Maurice stayed to help dressing the wounded. Uncle Jean pushed on to Niederbronn, where the population was starving. The road was almost impassable, and he reached the unfortunate little town in the dead of night with a supply of bread. The next morning he picked up Maurice again, and drove to Froeschwiller, where Marguerite's brother lives. Before this village there is a whole hecatomb of our poor soldiers.

They had stood their ground with the greatest pertinacity ; but gallantly as they had wrestled for six hours, they were at last taken in flank and brought to bay. The church of Froeschwiller is burnt down : in short, everything is burnt or in ruins. The small number of remaining houses are riddled with shot. A few women and children and old men were hanging about their shattered homesteads. The farmyard of Marguerite's brother, which lies on the slope of a ridge, is totally burnt down. The building had been taken and retaken by a regiment of Turcos, who were finally decimated and driven from their cover. Uncle Jean went in search of these wretched people. Marguerite's brother was out with his cart, which had been put under requisition. However, he found the poor wife and children in a brick-kiln in the neighbourhood, where they had taken refuge at the beginning of the fight. Poor Marguerite ! she is sadly cut up by these tidings. At first she cried bitterly, and then, with a stern resolution on her face, she went out, and in the evening she begged uncle Jean to forward to her brother a considerable sum of money, which she had taken out of the savings' bank ; and, without a word of

comment, she sent off the earnings of her long toilsome labours.

August the 10th, 1870.

MacMahon, it is said, has fallen back upon Saverne, where he is collecting his forces, taking up strong positions to cover the defiles of the Vosges. Early this morning the cannon was heard: a new engagement may have been fought during the day. Still more bloodshed! A great many families, who wish to avoid the horrors of a siege, make ready for flight. Two trains are organized, and will start for Belfort, to carry them away before the approach of the Prussians. It is so sad to see them going, to see their homes broken up, their houses shut. . . . What are we doing? We prepare quietly for the coming struggle.

August the 12th, 1870.

Such rain! A tempest burst over our city. The wind roared like thunder the whole night, and a deluge of water came down upon us in torrents.

God be thanked, the news of the day are that the investment of Strasbourg seems only to be a feint. The Crown Prince of Prussia is making his way straight to Paris. We are scarcely in a position to hold out a siege, ill-provided, as we are said to be, with ammunition and other war material. However, the garrison is actively engaged in arming the ramparts and barricading the approaches of the town. Our guns are mounted on the batteries; they look so formidable! Uncle Jean told me that they are of heavy calibre and immense range, and are considered far superior to all those the Germans can bring up against us. Our garrison is very small, but will be reinforced by the Garde Mobile. Our commandant is highly esteemed, and is believed to be a very superior officer, and fully able to defend our fortress.

August the 13th, 1870.

A feverish activity prevails amongst all citizens. All hands are engaged in some work for the benefit of all, either for the defence of the place, or for getting supplies. Uncle René is drilling his men. Uncle Jean has been elected *adjoint au maire*, and

takes his share in the administration of the town. Maurice is appointed to the Petit Séminaire, where an ambulance has been established. He is not only a good doctor, but also a clever surgeon, having made efficient studies at Paris and Vienna. In every district ladies' committees have been organized to afford aid to the wounded and the poor. Aline is a great help to our committee: she goes out to work every afternoon, and only returns at dusk under Maurice's escort. We generally spend the evening together, relating our doings or discussing the news, which are getting scarce now, but alas, are growing worse and worse! General Froissard has been beaten on the heights of Spicheren, near Forbach, and is in full retreat upon Metz, hotly pursued by the victorious Germans. A traveller has arrived in town after three days of marches and counter-marches to escape the vigilance of the Prussians, who in dense columns are moving along the roads, and are literally swarming over the whole of Alsace.

August the 14th, 1870.

Sunday has come round quite unawares, so busy have we been these last few days. After an eventful week, the day of Rest! Sunday, and Strasbourg is shut in, with the foe at her gates! There was no tolling of bells; from our lofty steeples, no merry din ringing through the stillness of the Sabbath morn. Even the sonorous voice of our cathedral is hushed in an ominous silence. The people in the streets seem to step noiselessly along the hot pavement. Over-head all is smiles and sunshine. Our church was much crowded; many a friendly nod greeted us as we walked up our aisle. As soon as we had taken our seats the deep sounds of the organ rose and vibrated through the vast edifice with the slow solemnity of a dirge. The whole congregation stood up with pale and anxious faces and tremulous lips; many attempts to join in the singing of the hymn failed: only with the beginning of the second verse voices grew steadier, and their full strain resounded through the vaults. The whole of the service was beautiful and impressive. The sermon most affecting. The text chosen for this solemn occasion and expounded

with the rare eloquence of Pasteur K——, was taken from St. Luke xii., 7: "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

August the 17th, 1870.

I am at a loss how to go on with my diary. It is so painful to recollect. The town is now closely invested, and we are getting inured to our awful position. Shall we ever get accustomed to the terrific thunder of the cannon, to the hissing sound of the shells which are hurled through the air and come down upon us in a shower of exploding hailstones of gigantic size? I shall never forget the first ordeal of fire I had to go through: no, never! . . . To my dying day I shall remember the frenzied terror which seized upon me and almost crushed my senses. It was in the night of the fifteenth. We were fast asleep, Aline and I; but roused by a fearful crash, we started from our bed and rushed downstairs. I was shrieking wildly, and running up to grandmother hid my face on her shoulder and sobbed aloud. Presently they urged me to dress, but I remained deaf to their entreaties, and only clung the faster

to grandmother. All the while the thunder of the cannon kept on rolling over our heads ; now and then the crash of a falling chimney was heard ; shouts of men intermingled with the smashing of windows and broken tiles. Then came a lull When I told grandmother how much I wished to be brave, and how sorry I felt, Aline kissed my tear-stained face and grandmother stroked my head gently, as if she wanted to wipe out the remembrance of this fearful hour. Later I found myself tucked up in her own bed, her dear hand still resting on my hot brow. It felt so much like a blessing : and I such a coward ! From sheer exhaustion I went to sleep.

Yesterday the enemy again opened fire upon our unfortunate town. I had to undergo the same mental agony ; I did not cry, I was nestled up close in uncle Jean's arms, trembling from head to foot, now and then gasping for air : I felt more dead than alive. "The child is killing herself with terror," said uncle Jean presently to grandmother, and turning round to me he added,— "Lucie, I cannot bear it ! What shall I do ? Lord, have pity on thy weak child."

August the 18th, 1870.

How cloudless has been our life up to the present time—what a contrast now ! Uncle Jean was not far wrong the other day when he said that he scarcely remembers to have seen me cry since I was a baby. I wonder why people often speak so sadly of poor orphans, and pitifully shrug their shoulders at them. We are orphans, too, Aline and I ; but no happier children have ever been loved, petted, and taken care of ; oh ! with such tenderness and foresight. Who has a kinder grandmother than ours, a better uncle than uncle Jean ? Did we ever lack caresses, kisses, or comfort in the little troubles of our simple life ? I cannot realize that, under any other circumstances, we might have spent a pleasanter childhood, or could have been in any way happier, until this calamitous war broke out. I have no recollection of having missed anything. Sometimes I do long for my mother. My mother ! to her my thoughts often wandered of late ; and yet I have never known her. To have the faintest memory of her would be happiness. Aline ought to remember what she was like, for Aline is three

years older than I. There is a little prayer-book, with a name written on the title-page. I have never felt the gentle touch of the hand which wrote it. That hand was cold and stiffened in death before it could fondle and bless the newborn babe. . . . Oh, I wish so much that I had seen her once—my own dead mother!

August the 19th, 1870.

Yesterday evening, about nine o'clock, we were startled by a formidable cannonade, the forerunner of a long succession of fearful sharp crashes of exploding grenades and shells. Our house, solid as it is, shook so violently that we thought it must have been struck, and we passed several minutes in agonizing suspense, till we found out that although death had been nigh, the hand of the Almighty has averted it for this time. The whole night the fire was kept up with great vigour, houses were damaged in every direction, small and large fires occurred in three different districts. The noise of the guns was deafening, and nothing could keep it out; but grandmother's soft voice and words of prayer were soothing. I do not fret any

longer at my appointed trial, as grandmother calls it; but if I could turn aside from the bitter cup, I would gladly die. . . . It is so terrible to see those you love in danger, to witness death and destruction!

August the 20th, 1870.

Small encounters take place daily between our garrison and the besieging troops, with little or no success on our side. The Germans continue to entrench themselves, and are bringing more siege-guns into position; they are hardly disturbed by the powerful fire from our ramparts. Two days ago an envoy presented himself at the gate of Saverne, from whence he was taken to headquarters. He had been sent by General von Beyer to summon our commandant to surrender the fortress, or, in case of non-compliance, the regular bombardment of the town will be proceeded with. It seems that their cannonading had been from flying batteries; but now that their parallels are finished, the fire will be directed simultaneously upon all parts of the town. The citizens are exasperated; large crowds followed the

parlementaire through the streets, shouting, "No surrender! Vive la France!" With a dull pain we watched the spectacle from our windows, and understood that the slow-riding officer, with his orderly by his side bearing a white flag, was carrying the fate of our town, our forfeited properties and lives.

This afternoon, however, great hope is entertained that a relieving army will reach us in time. God speed them!

August the 21st, 1870.

Yesterday, after a kind of family conclave, a great change was made in our household arrangements. Maurice had for some days past entreated grandmother to leave our house, which is much exposed. Uncle René begged us to go and stay with him. Marie would be delighted to have us. Uncle Jean also was of opinion that it would be advisable to move to some house nearer the centre of the town. Grandmother shook her head at all proposals. "We shall be safe in the hands of the Lord: He is our stronghold and our refuge," said she, repeatedly. Poor old Marguerite, I had called

her from the kitchen to take her share in our consultation. She is looking like a ghost at noonday, and we can well sympathise with each other. Marguerite protested against staying in the house; on the other hand, she will on no account leave behind her household gods, not even her new hearth, the pride of her eyes. At last the most practical of all uncles made a compromise by proposing that we should leave the upper storeys to take care of themselves; move downstairs and settle as well as we can in the two rooms on the ground-floor. How sad is taking leave of one's own room! We looked over all our chattels and goods, which we had treasured up for ever so long; we took down from the shelves all our knickknacks and put them safe into drawers: then came the turn of our books. It was most difficult to decide which to take and which to leave: sometimes the tiniest and most worn ugly-looking volume proved to be a special favourite either with Aline or me. Our perplexity was great, for ere long we had found out that all of them, without exception, had been favourites by turns, and therefore, for association's sake, we would not leave the least of our treasures to probable destruction. We told uncle

Jean our difficulty, and soon he appeared with a good-sized deal box which would contain all our books, and the music we put on the top. This done, we removed our flowers: there are still such beautiful rosebuds; they will soon open if I can find a nice sunny place somewhere downstairs. At last, with a trembling hand, I unfastened the cage of my pretty birdies and took my diary, Aline her writing-desk, and then we kissed each other on the threshold of our little realm, where since our childhood we had been queens of all we surveyed. I could hardly tear myself away. I wish I did not get so much attached to things! We shall directly establish our camps. Grandmother has her bed put up in the little room next the dining-room; where Aline and I will sleep on mattresses. Uncle Jean will have one corner to himself, and Marguerite is to be screened off in another. Maurice has already taken up his quarters in the Petit Séminaire, in order to be near his patients. Our perplexity was great, for we found out that all of them, without exception, had been favourites by turns, and therefore, for association's sake, we would not leave the least of our treasures to probable destruction. We told uncle

August the 23rd, 1870.

The regular bombardment of the town has begun ! The threat of our foes is being carried out, and, after a consecutive fire which lasted thirteen hours, we understand its fearful meaning. A rain of projectiles of all sizes fell upon every quarter of our town. Several public buildings are actually destroyed, others are greatly damaged ; not even the hospital, with its sick and wounded, has been spared ; and the patients of two wards were of necessity removed to the cellars, several having been killed in their beds. A great many of the inhabitants of our faubourgs are crowding the streets of the inner town, wandering about in search of shelter. The misery of the poor is already very great, and the price of food is rising daily. But all are ready to endure with patience any kind of privation, to undergo any trial, and all classes of people show a heroism which is surprising. It is true those who have to spare give most generously. Soup-kitchens have been opened in various places of the town, in order to help the people who have already lost everything ; other arrangements are going to be made for the relief

of those who had not the means to provide their own stores, and for those who are out of work. The administration of the town is also taking measures to prevent extensive conflagrations. Everything is done to inspire confidence, and we shall hold out to the last.

August the 26th, 1870.

Again and again the besiegers directed upon us their murderous fire. The day before yesterday we were bombarded during eleven hours: a fearfully long time to spend in a dark cellar. However, fortunate are those who still enjoy such a shelter. Hundreds and hundreds have been turned adrift on the streets, flying from their burning homes; saving perhaps their lives from the flames, to meet death in a more frightful form of mangled limbs and agonizing pain. Down here we have suffered terribly, ravages of every kind, both in destruction of property as well as loss of life. And yet it was but the prelude of a more disastrous night which was to follow. The night of the 24th of August will be recorded in the annals of history with flaming words of fire and blood. More than

thirty persons of all ages and classes, and all unknown to us, fled to our cellar, imploring, with wringing hands, permission to stay with us for the night. Women with babies in their arms, crying children, aged men and women crept in, one after another. It was a heartrending scene which I cannot describe. We three had clustered around the kneeling form of our beloved grandmother; my hands clasped in hers, my trembling lips tried to repeat the prayers which she poured out before the Lord, mighty to save and to protect. Several of our strange visitors gathered round us, listening attentively and deriving fortitude and comfort in this hour of trial from the inspired words of the Bible. While this was going on in our dark cellar sparingly lighted up with a lamp, what must it have been outside in the raging hurricane of deadly missiles! Ruins and desolation bear testimony of that night. At daybreak the firing slackened; many crawled back into the streets in search of lost children, husbands, or friends. Our house is greatly damaged; a part of the roof is gone; two rooms at the top have been destroyed, and the furniture torn to pieces by a bomb which fell into the next house. We only escaped its burning

to the ground owing to the vigilance and untiring exertions of uncle Jean, who, with two hired watchmen, had spent the night in the garret at the risk of their limbs and lives. We cannot leave the house any more, even if we desired: where could we go to, when hundreds are without home, wandering about, taking shelter sometimes under the arch of a bridge or in churches? Even the cells of the prisons are crowded, and much sought by the richest families, being considered bomb-proof. But those abodes are mostly very damp, and more unhealthy than the cellars; there are also plenty of rats and insects.

August the 27th, 1870.

It is over. The first and much-dreaded meal of strange flesh may be reckoned as one of the events of the past. I am truly glad of it, although I have a foretaste of what is coming to-morrow: very likely we shall have to get it over again as well we can. It was all uncle Jean's doing; he brought home some horse-flesh and ordered Marguerite to get it ready for dinner. Poor soul, horrified as she was at the very touch of it, she did not dare to

disobey her master's command ; and, to our indignation, the neatest dish of horse-ragoût appeared at dinner. Grandmother did not seem to relish it ; but Aline is not strong and wants fresh meat daily, so grandmother was to set us the example. Aline kept on picking at her morsel, while uncle Jean glanced from one plate to the other with the sternness of a policeman on duty. Suddenly he burst into such a hearty laughter as I had not heard for many days. He had watched me and had found out that I was shutting my eyes whilst cramming into my mouth the loathsome bits as fast as I could, and only stopped when I had half-choked myself with the overhaste of my proceedings. "Well done, Lucie," exclaimed he, to my great disgust ; "you are the bravest of the brave: the child went through the business first-rate, only she looks rather greedy over her empty plate." What a shame to tease me when I had tried so hard not to be foolish !

August the 28th, 1870.

A The bombardment continues. Sometimes it relaxes in fury, and then it resumes the attack

with redoubled violence, chiefly in the night. Grandmother is resigned to take up a permanent abode in the cellar, where we have already been sleeping for several nights. We have just had our last dinner up here. Shall we ever meet in this room again and dine together? Maurice is here for an hour: we had not seen him during a whole week. He told us how fast the ambulances and hospitals are filling. Many a brave life has already been sacrificed. Alas, a great number of women and poor children have been killed, or hurt so badly that in many cases amputation had been necessary. How dreadful to be maimed for a whole lifetime; how sad to see children with crutches and empty coat-sleeves! Farewell, my diary! Down in the cellar, I shall not be able to write much; however, I shall keep my own treasure safe under my pillow.

August the 28th, 1870.

Little did I know yesterday, when I laid aside my pen, what sorrow was in store for us—that one of our circle would be missing before the shadows of the night would be gathering around us. A stray shot was fired, the shell grazed the corner of

the house next door, and sent splinters flying to the right and left. We were just then moving a few things down to the cellar, in order to get what small comforts it is possible to have in such a dreary place. Poor Marguerite! she was standing outside the house near the staircase, when the death-dealing grenade burst, and she fell. A fragment pierced her left arm, inflicting a horrible ghastly wound. Uncle Jean was running to her rescue, but before he could reach her the harm was done. Senseless, we carried her to the cellar. However, with grandmother's care, we soon brought her back to consciousness. When she had recovered a little from the shock, we had to prepare her for a sore trial, which she must have felt keenly. We had to explain to her that her removal to the Hôpital Civil was urgent, as no doctor would come down here to attend to her arm. Poor thing! with all her peculiarities, she took it so nicely. It was a great relief to us all. Uncle Jean had already gone to call to his aid two of our neighbours. Meanwhile, grandmother prayed with Marguerite that the Lord would give her patience in her sufferings, and, if it were His will, restore her speedily to health and strength.

When she was laid on the stretcher, and we had to take leave of her, grandmother was much moved as she kissed her old friend, who had been her faithful servant more than thirty years. Aline and I were trying hard to keep off our tears, and then we parted. I could not help running after the sad procession down our street, till at last uncle Jean beckoned me home. I stopped, and looked round. Our street! Where was it? My eyes only rested on rows of tottering walls alongside heaps of loose stones and mounds of rubbish.* Where had they gone to, all the inmates of yonder roofless houses, with the dismal-looking windows broken and charred? What sad havoc wrought, with merciless barbarity, in less than a fortnight! I was like one spell-bound. Motionless I remained, staring at this vast destruction. I could have stood there for hours. I had no fears. I was hardly aware that shell after shell came tearing through the air. The sun was smiling radiantly upon me and the surrounding ruins. Something like melted gold-dust was hanging over the graves of lone homesteads, and I was wondering whether, behind those mounds of rubbish, I should still find

* See Frontispiece.

budding shrubs and blooming flower-beds. All the time snatches of a song kept on haunting my memory, and for a moment I was in doubt whether it would be better for me to break out in a wild song, or sit down in mute despair, and cry to my heart's content. Suddenly I was roused by the approach of patrolling soldiers, and I hurried back to our house.

August the 29th, 1870.

Last night the cannonading was carried on with redoubled fierceness. Entire destruction threatened our whole town, bringing death upon its eighty thousand inhabitants. Thousands and thousands of *bombes incendiaires* were hurled upon us, and Strasbourg was burning at the four corners. The town looked, by the glare of the conflagration, as if it were shrouded in an immense sheet of fire and flames, and the firing did not abate during the whole night. There are no words to describe such sights, and nothing can render the sensation of woe which creeps over those who are called to witness them. Early in the morning, uncle René came to us, scared and breathless, with singed hair

and torn clothes, covered all over with dust and soot. Their house had burnt down in the night; nothing could be saved but their bare lives and the clothes they had on. Marie has fled with her children to a widowed sister, who lives with her little family only a few streets off. Grandmother was much shaken by the recital of this new visitation. She wanted to go immediately to Marie, but uncle Jean dissuaded her from going out. However, to lessen in some way the anxiety we feel for each other at our respective homes, we made the following agreement. Uncle René is to come every morning to tell how they have fared during the night. On his way he will also call on Maurice, whose time is so precious, that he is very seldom able to contrive to see us. It is a great trial for Aline; but she is resigned to any sacrifice. Uncle Jean takes his beat towards evening, as he terms it, and in this manner we shall have regularly news from each other twice a day.

August the 30th, 1870.

After our scanty breakfast, which consisted of nothing else but a thickly-made soup, just palat-

able enough to be eaten, I begged uncle Jean to release me from my given promise to continue my diary. He said he would not hear of such a thing, although he admits the difficulty of performing such a task in a cellar, with the scanty light which we can afford. After having fumbled in his pockets for some time, a nice drawing-pencil turned up, which he presented me, after having carefully pointed it. "This will be my share of the difficulty," he added, handing it over the table. "Remind me to point it every morning; and whenever there is the least chance of writing, pray do so. One day this journal will give you satisfaction, perhaps some comfort—who knows?" Uncle Jean's wishes once decreed in his peremptory way, are considered by everybody in the house as so many commands, which are necessarily to be followed up by strict obedience. I hope there will never be any shortcomings on that score on my part, whatever the circumstances may be. Our little world in the cellars will be as much regulated as the possible emergencies from without will allow it. Aline volunteers for the cooking. Whenever the horrible thunder dies away, we slip from our safe shelter and attend to our allotted work. Grand-

mother sends every morning by uncle Jean a parcel of *charpie* to poor Marguerite. The account we have concerning her is not satisfactory. She is delirious the greater part of the time, although there is no immediate danger. Maurice sends us word that he will go and see her as often as possible. She has great confidence in his skill, and there must be comfort in seeing, from time to time, the face of a friend approaching her sick-bed. One of the cleverest surgeons attends to her, and she has every care money can afford. I asked permission to go and see her, but uncle Jean frowned at my request, and I did not dare to insist for the present. Marie is in great trouble; all their property is lost, nothing left, not even a change of clothes for herself and children. Uncle René took a bundle of things for them, also some food. Now that the novelty of staying with their cousins is wearing off, the little boys are fretting sadly in their damp cellar. Ernest made an attempt to go out of doors. "I have not got the measles," protested he, stoutly, when nurse brought him back; and when she mildly remonstrated, telling him about the Prussians, the little fellow replied, "Nursie, I was just going to look for them. I want them to

stop this awful noise, or father will certainly shoot them with his new gun." Poor little darlings!

September the 1st, 1870.

The bombardment is continued day and night uninterruptedly, and with great violence. Faubourg after faubourg is laid waste, street after street is levelled to the ground. War is indeed showering all its horrors upon us. Large fires are constantly breaking out, and the glare of a conflagration is generally responded to by the enemy with salvoes of projectiles, so as to render abortive all attempts to rescue anything out of the burning houses. The wretched people have resigned themselves to their fate; they forsake everything without murmur, too grateful if they succeed in saving life and limbs. The exasperation against the barbarity of our foes is general; but one feeling predominates—the desire to hold out to the utmost. Our gallant little garrison is performing wonders, in comparison with the inefficiency of their resources. Great loss of life has already been sustained, and new victims are daily added to the mournful list. How long will it be? How

many times will hope be delayed? "The army is advancing! The Prussians are beaten!" Such news runs often through the town, and the population is never tired of receiving the intelligence with unbounded enthusiasm; which, however, soon dies away and vanishes in mute despondency. These fluctuations of revived hope and despair are most trying; like flashes of lightning, they only reveal the darkness of the gloom. Grandmother is wonderful in her belief that things will come right in the end. It is the second siege of her experience; and as Strasbourg stood out gallantly in 1814, why not in 1870?

September the 3rd, 1870.

Uncle René came breathless this morning with good news. He told us that a *parlementaire* had arrived at the Mairie with *sauf-conduits*, signed by General von Werder, the commander-in-chief of the besieging troops, for those persons who wished to leave the town. Three had been addressed to him and uncle Jean by some unknown friends; owing to this unexpected bounty at least three of us could escape the further anguish and danger

of the bombardment. We all gave God heartfelt thanks for such mercies. It was understood that grandmother was to go ; she, however, declined to avail herself of such a favour, and refused to forsake her native place in the hour of trial. Her refusal was so decided, and blended with so much devotedness to her beloved Strasbourg, that we were quite moved, and no one thought of pressing her further. Aline shook her head. "I remain with her and Maurice," said she softly. At last grandmother proposed that I should accompany Marie and her children. I felt quite grieved at this suggestion, and protested against it with all my might. I felt so grateful to uncle Jean who did not seem to urge the point, and thus the matter dropped. Both uncles are gone to see to the necessary preparations. I fancy uncle René is truly glad to be able to send away wife and children ; they are altogether in a sad plight, homeless, and without clothes and food. We are comparatively well off here ; our cellar is vaulted, the walls are thick and of massive construction. The damages to our house are as yet not considerable. It is true we had several narrow escapes, but have been wonderfully preserved, considering that this

part of the town was first assailed, and has been of late almost constantly under fire.

September the 4th, 1870.

One day is so much like another in our cellar, with the never-ceasing thunder outside, we hardly keep time now, and are only aware that another day has dawned by the streak of light which falls across the narrow window over our cellar door. Then we wait with anxious hearts for the coming of uncle René. When dusk deepens into dark, and another night has set in, uncle Jean's turn has come to go for inquiry. We three remain alone, listening to the increase of the firing, and praying for his safe return. To-day, being the third Sunday since Strasbourg was invested, we held a prayer-meeting. At grandmother's wish all the members of our family, and some friends who still venture into the open streets, met in our cellar. We had made a few preparations. Maurice and uncle Jean moved the harmonium to the cellar, as a surprise for Aline; then we placed seats around the table, over which we spread a white cloth; in the middle we put a burning lamp. One of our

first visitors was Pasteur Sch——, an old friend of grandmother's, who with untiring zeal is ministering day and night to the afflicted, regardless of fatigue and danger. He told us many a sad tale of sorrow and suffering, many a beauteous example of Christian love and self-denial, which has come to his knowledge since the siege began. "Tribulation is a mighty refiner of our too selfish nature," said he. "There is a patience, an uncomplaining submission manifest wherever I go. The fiery trial has not come down upon us without the gentle influences of the Spirit, which changes losses and crosses into eternal gains.

"Commit thy way to Him," was the choral by which we opened this solemn hour. They had a wonderful effect, these quivering human voices, blended with the hissing grenades and the deep bass of the cannon. After a short and touching address we all partook of the holy sacrament, and we closed with a prayer suited to the occasion. The whole was most impressive and solemn. The performance of the rites of our religion in such an unusual manner, in this dismal place of worship, the dim light and deep shadows, the exaltation in the countenances of the little assembly, praying and

singing with death at the doors, was a scene never to be forgotten. It made me think of the first Christians under the persecutions, when they fled from their homes to hide themselves in caves and catacombs to worship God. I believe every one of us was struck with the same idea. Hardly any words were exchanged when we separated. Those who remained behind were in doubt whether the others would reach their homes in safety, and there was a leave-taking which resembled a parting for life.

September the 5th, 1870.

After all, Marie has not been able to leave town with her children. Baby, who had not been well for several days, had a severe attack of croup—an additional sorrow to his poor sweet mother. Uncle René tells us that Marie is looking like a shadow, so worn out is she with care, fatigue, and anxiety. He deplores that his duties keep him so much from home. I offered to go and stay with her, as I might be of use there. Grandmother is almost inclined to let me go. Will uncle Jean consent, I wonder? News from Marguerite

reached us yesterday. Maurice went to see her before he came to our meeting. He brought messages from her for each of us. The fever is quite gone, and she is improving gradually. However, Maurice is afraid her arm will remain paralyzed. Our active Marguerite, so entirely rapt up all her life in sweeping, dusting, and no end of work, how will she bear her trial?

September the 7th, 1870.

There is no respite for us. Day after day, night after night, the besiegers bring to bear their hottest fire on our doomed city. The great Reaper of this bloody harvest is gathering fast his ghastly sheaves. No words can measure the nameless woe which fills my heart to-day. Oh, how painful my task! To go on writing—writing with blinded eyes and burning tears the sorrowful tale which rends my heart. Maurice is dead! And they were to be married before Christmas! Dear Aline, she looks so white and peaceful, lying quite still on her pile of mattresses, as one who has already gone from us. Her earthly happiness has been blighted so suddenly: all her joys destroyed by the cold,

pitiless hand of death! It oppresses me like a nightmare and confuses my brains. But it is truth—fearful truth. I know it all, and how it happened. Scarcely a few hours have elapsed since I heard the short cough I know so well. It was uncle Jean, anxious that I should come to him. He was lingering outside the cellar, not daring to meet the wistful glances, the hurried questions which always greet his coming. “How is Maurice? Have you seen him?” A foreboding of an evil hour at hand ran through my whole being. Trembling, I approached the door and unfastened it, humming a tune to disguise my fears. “Give this paper to grandmother: take care of poor Aline. God help us all!” whispered he. Just at this moment, screams of “Fire! fire!” came down our street. Uncle Jean took advantage of this incident, and hurried back towards the town. Aline had no suspicion that anything was amiss. Dream-like, I made my way back to the opposite side of the cellar, holding on dizzily by chairs and the wall, till I reached grandmother’s arm-chair. I crouched down at her feet without a word, and remained there, unable to speak or to move. Shading my face with my left hand, I kept the right hidden

with the fatal paper concealed in it. What message of bitter suffering did it contain? I was asking this question over and over again, till at last a sharp pang shot through my heart. When it left me I grew cold; but my head was clear, with the acute consciousness that I had to exert all my faculties to lessen the blow I could not avert: I did not even know what it was. An hour passed away—I cannot tell how slowly; minutes lingered as if the whole world had come to a standstill. Our timepiece struck half-past nine, and I was still in the dark as to what I should do next. Another half-hour! Then came the growing dread that disclosure was at hand; that soon it would come, and then? . . . I could not follow this thought. . . . At last it struck ten. Grandmother moved; her hand fell gently on my bended head. "Lucie, are you asleep?" said she. Her voice startled me, but I felt unable to move. Presently I rose. I felt faint with the effort; but after a minute or two I succeeded in fetching the Bible. I laid it open before grandmother, pointing to the slip of paper, which looked like a book-marker. Then I turned round to screen her from Aline, who was unconsciously folding up her work. I kept my

eyes steadfastly on her face. There was no trace of fear, and yet I heard distinctly the rustling sound of paper, then the quick turning of leaves. A deep sigh, and then grandmother said, "Children, let us pray." She read the twenty-third Psalm: after that we ought to have prayed; but there was no prayer. A painful pause ensued. . . . Another deep sigh, and grandmother added, "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; the name of the Lord be praised!" "It is Maurice!" rung from Aline's lips; and, lifeless, we caught her up in our arms.

September the 8th, 1870.

Time is wearing away slowly; with it the wan light which comes in through the open cellar-door. The terrific cannonading has been gradually dying out this last half-hour, and I ventured to open the door. We are sadly in want of pure air. It would perhaps revive dear Aline. Her face is so white—so death-like; a slight trembling of her eyelids only betokens that there is still life. . . . How long will it last? . . . How soon will the cold blast of an awful reality quench this flickering spark? Not a sound has passed her lips since she

uttered the shriek, which keeps ringing in my ears night and day. Her half-closed eyes never shed a tear. I wish she could weep, for her sake and mine. Tears always take away something of the bitterness of grief. Perhaps I could then venture to go near her; I cannot now. I am afraid to disturb her dream-like slumbers, which seem to fold her in her own sorrow. How could she notice me? And so I creep about the cellar very quietly, helping grandmother, who has taken her seat near Aline, moistening from time to time her blanched lips, and speaking a soft word of comfort. Comfort! is there any, with this chill on my heart, with the dull pain in my head?

September the 9th, 1870.

Another painful day is gone. Maurice has passed from amongst us. A new mound of green turf has been added to the long row in the Jardin Botanique, where our dead find a temporary resting-place. Uncle Jean followed him to the grave, with many friends, and hundreds of people and soldiers. Maurice was a general favourite. His amiable character and high qualities will stand out

in the memory of all those who knew him. Since the siege began his charity and untiring exertions amongst the wounded have won him the hearts of all the soldiers. "Il a bien mérité de la patrie," they say; and there will always be associated with his premature death the comforting thought, that he died in his anxiety to save the defenders of his country. Death overtook him at the post of honour. It was at the Corps de Garde, near the Porte de Saverne. We did not even know how much he had been exposed daily; and that every other day found him away from the ambulance, attending the wounded at some of the outposts. He was dressing a poor young mobile who had been struck on the rampart, when a shell came flying in through the window, killing the wounded man, and hurting Maurice—oh! so fearfully: he had both his legs carried off; and, besides him, three others were killed on the spot. Maurice died from hemorrhage before they reached the hospital. Half-an-hour later uncle Jean made his usual evening call, and found that he was dead! Nothing but a ghastly mutilated corpse remained of the friend he loved so well. Maurice is gone without a word of farewell to Aline. With a

pressure of his hand—with a smile beaming in his eyes—he went away last Sunday. He is gone, not lost ; for he died in Christ.

September the 10th, 1870.

Fragments of things came to me as I lay waking on my couch ; things pleasant and bright, long gone by, as it seemed to me in the gray twilight of the cellar, with the gay strip of sunshine on the small window. I had gone to rest towards morning, and dreamed of Aline and our dead mother. It was a rapture of happiness. I forgot the painful yesterdays, and the still more painful to-morrows. Then came a change in the vision : I became slowly convinced of something horrible which had happened ; blood-stains and muffled drums. I was wondering confusedly what it all meant ; the deep shades around me, and the uproar outside ; the flitting forms of happy children, and the leaden pain in my throbbing temples. As I gazed vacantly before me, trying to get a glance at the averted face of my mother, I became aware that it was our grandmother. Her bowed head and sad countenance brought it

all back to me. I fell wearily on my pillow, and wept bitterly. This outburst of grief brought her to my side, and bending over me lovingly, she said, "He knows their sorrows, my poor child! This trial also comes from His own tender-loving hand—His own tender, unchanging heart."

September the 11th, 1870.

At uncle Jean's entreaty Doctor M. came to see Aline. We scarcely hoped so much; for the firing is as heavy as ever, and most alarmingly the bombs fly over our street. When the Doctor withdrew his fingers from her pulse, which evidently puzzled him, and pushed gently back the white thin hand, I knew by the expression of his face that there was no hope. No hope! and I am writing out the pitiless words with a steady hand. Has it come to this? Poor dear grandmother, when we were alone, she said to me in way of comfort, "If Maurice's fate proves to be her death-knell, we must not grudge her Heaven and its bliss. Aline lived in Christ, and to her, death is gain!" O grandmother, you are right; we are in need of prayer.

September the 12th, 1870.

Swiss delegates have arrived ; hundreds of people are crowding around the Hôtel du Commerce to give in their names, and to plead for permission to leave the town. People are crawling out of their cellars to listen to tidings which fill our unfortunate town with joy and hope. Roofless houses have hoisted the tricolor flag. Napoleon is a prisoner in the hands of the King of Prussia. France is a Republic, and between the fast succeeding volleys of artillery there are shouts of gladness and cheers. Uncle Jean is much excited about this new turn of affairs ; he believes we may yet be saved. A relieving army may come and break up the circle of iron which has closed around us for many weeks. O God, if it could be true !

September the 15th, 1870.

Another eventful day must be added to my record. The Swiss deputies have left the town, with several hundred old men, women, and children. We saw Marie on her way to the Place

d'Austerlitz, the meeting-place of the emigrants. She had to cross the top of our street. Grandmother and I left the cellar; we took our stand on the landing of the staircase, as a more sheltered place than the balcony of our house, to have a last sight of her and the little boys. We had to wait some time for their arrival. To breathe once more freely the open air, to drink sunshine in this beautiful autumn weather, was a new and vivid sensation almost overpowering! The brightness of the day struck and hurt my eyes; a feeling of home-sickness crept over me: the world outside had grown so strange and wide. I longed to go back to the grayness of our cellar. Soon we saw the little procession, uncertain and frightened, winding its way across the quay, down the street. Uncle Jean pointed out to them our elevated position. I waved my handkerchief in token of farewell; grandmother stretched out both her arms towards the upturned white faces eagerly looking towards us. It was a melancholy little caravan, these two lonely women with their seven tiny infants. The two eldest girls were pushing the perambulators, in which two of the little boys and various parcels were closely packed together. Marie had wrapped her

baby in a shawl, and its weight seemed rather too much for the thin slender mother, with her tearful eyes and sweet smile. She was going forth in the world alone with her children, leaving behind husband and family. Uncle Jean had taken charge of the widowed mother and her youngest little girl. Little Ernest trotted heavily down the street, taking hold of the hand of his father. Nurse walked behind carrying an enormous bundle on her head. When the last of them had vanished round the corner, we retraced our steps over rubbish and stones down to the cellar, but our thoughts followed our beloved ones, now exposed to many dangers and hardships.

September the 16th, 1870.

Many a restless night and many a weary day grandmother and I spend together in prayer and unutterable grief, watching our dear Aline through her last struggle. There has been no change for us. The booming of cannon never ceases; shots follow each other as regularly as the beating of the heart. Aline does not seem to be any more disturbed by the tremendous noise. She has hardly

ever stirred since the day after the funeral, when she asked, in a scarcely audible whisper, for uncle Jean. He sat with her for a long while and told her all. When she heard how self-denying Maurice had been in his calling, how Death found him while relieving others, a slight blush overspread her pale cheeks and a single tear gathered underneath the dark lashes of her half-shut eyes. Poor, sweet sister! The blow fell heavily, and she bends her head with patient, uncomplaining resignation. It is so sad to see her fading away in this damp and dreary place, when, perhaps, air, sunshine, and proper food might have restored her again. I must not brood over second causes. I well know that *all things* work together for good: but it is hard to see her die.

September the 18th, 1870.

Another Sunday! Our own beautiful church is a heap of ruins, they say,—burnt down to the ground, with our dearest associations. Hospitals, churches,—nothing is sacred in this barbarous warfare. Still the cannon roars, and hope of relief is deferred indefinitely. “Wait on the Lord: be of

good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart : wait, I say, on the Lord," grandmother read to us when we had gathered round Aline for our morning service. There are undertones in grandmother's full, rich voice which reveal depths of sorrow—and of joy. Joy ! it sounds strange ; but is so. Trial after trial has come down upon us, and almost joyfully grandmother bears her heavy burden. She is wonderfully sustained ; for there is perfect peace and entire confidence to be found in her, and that is her secret. I understand her better now than I did before the war broke out. Dear grandmother, the ministering angel of our happy childhood, now our stay and comfort in the hour of need and distress !

September the 20th, 1870.

Food is getting scarcer every day, and I am often at a loss how to provide for our slender fare. The cooking has perforce devolved upon me. I take great pains to do my very best, and yet I prove to be a very indifferent cook. Uncle Jean keeps watch over me while engaged in the kitchen. He is a most valuable help and re-

members always exactly grandmother's instructions concerning the preparation of the food. His timely hints have often prevented my burning and spoiling everything. Our little back kitchen is rather sheltered by adjoining buildings; however, many a missile comes flying past whilst I am there. I little heed it now. I feel so chilled, so cold, as if cut out of stone. Sometimes I think nothing can move me any more. Experience has taught me that one gets hardened by suffering. We seldom talk now, uncle Jean and I: a curious estrangement has come between us. I could not help it. One evening he drew near the corner where for a long time I had been sitting sad and listless. He told me, with a kiss, "Lucie, this will never do. Where is my birdlike maiden gone to? She has left us, and instead of her I see a pale, worn woman, with a sad brow and a sorrowful heart." These words had dropped with desperate distinctness from his lips; they had a painful effect upon my ear. I turned to listen: our eyes met for a moment. I wanted to tell him all—my doubts, my fears, my heavy sorrow; but words failed. I felt the child was gone, indeed;—never, never to come back again.

September the 22nd, 1870.

I could not write yesterday. I felt ill and trembling the whole day. I had such a narrow escape in the morning, while preparing some broth for Aline. I stood just in the middle of the little back kitchen, when a shock struck the house, followed by a fearful crash. A chimney fell, another tottered; roofings, window-sashes, door-posts, showered in the air. I staggered towards uncle Jean, who was standing within the doorway. I shall never forget the expression of frozen horror in his haggard face. Before us in the low-roofed passage rolled, thundering, a heavy projectile, and shut us both out. It was an awful moment: there seemed no escape from the death-bringing explosion. I remained without motion, almost without breath. Suddenly a strong arm was put around me, and I felt myself dragged out into the yard, through the broken window. When we reached the cellar we both fell upon our knees. I was stunned, and for several hours I could not shake off the stupor which paralysed my senses. Later in the day another shell burst open the wall of the dining-room, and tore to shreds a part of the furniture.

This morning, uncle Jean showed me the unloaded projectile. It is a shrapnell of great weight, and is of conical form, like a small sugar-loaf. It contains three hundred and sixty small bullets. Such is the strange keepsake of our wonderful escape.

September the 24th, 1870.

It cannot last much longer. It is almost beyond endurance to watch our dear Aline lingering her last amongst us; to see her emaciated figure, to listen to the wearisome heavy breath . . . and no help from without!

I had crept, in my old way, to grandmother's feet, and laid my aching head in her lap. She stroked my hair gently, and silent tears stole down my cheeks. I was thinking of our last walk in the beautiful sunshine, down the broad avenue, with the merry birds twittering in the trees, the wild flowers drooping their tiny heads under the heat of the day, some yellow autumn leaves hanging about like butterflies, or withered hopes. These recollections brought home to my heart the sharp pain I felt then, and the sadness which overclouded

that happy day. It appeared to me at first as a small dark speck in the serene sky. The black cloud has been growing faster and faster, and is changed into a gloomy bulwark, with sudden glares and heavy thunder. It has settled between me and my cherished sister like a barrier, which removes her beyond my reach. . . . And I was praying—not for her health—I was praying for that strength which might enable me to pray for her release. . . . But she must not go from me without a word, a farewell. I believe if I could once more look into her tender, loving eyes, I should bear it better.

September the 26th, 1870.

It had struck midnight. Grandmother, tired out with watching, had gone to sleep in her arm-chair. Aline had been dozing for several hours. Suddenly she turned wearily in her bed and called me to her side. She stretched out her white hand, and raised her eyes upon me—her starlike, beaming eyes. Whether to marvel at the peace therein, or to cry out with pain, I did not know. “I am so weary,” said she, in a low husky voice.

Then, turning her eyes quickly from grandmother to me, she added, "Love her for us both, when I am gone." Hot tears were my only answer. "Forgive, Lucie, my going away from you! I am so happy to die" she paused a little, then asked me to repeat the verse: "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more tears, for the former things are passed away." I pressed her hand against my cheek, and remained silent. By-and-by she whispered feebly a word or two. I listened intently and heard—

"Maurice . . . Lord . . . my Saviour!"

Then came a slight stirring, and it was all——. Long after, as I was still holding the lifeless hand, grandmother bent over us, and weeping, kissed both her adopted children, the living and the dead. Our nameless woe was drowned in the loud, heavy, regular roar which beat upon our shaking house. The firing on this fearful night sounded more than ever like the mighty tide of an angry sea. Since sunset uncle Jean had been out and has not yet returned. We knew that again large conflagrations were raging in the city. With the daylight the noise went down, and the mighty

tides ebbed away, and Aline was sleeping her last peaceful sleep.

A few hours later I was roused by the ringing steps of uncle Jean, returning at last from his labours of love. I had a dim idea that he was tired and hungry, and I attempted to get some breakfast for him ; but he would not eat. One glance towards the white bed and the still form told him the sorrowful truth. We remained together, all three, for a long time, silent, and lost in grief that nothing could soothe but the memory of her pure, blameless life. By-and-by, some hurried words were exchanged. I caught "upstairs" and "dining-room." It struck me with a new light. I started up, and thrusting myself between the bed and uncle Jean, I besought him, with uplifted hands, not to take her away: not to carry her to the dining-room. I spoke of shells and dangers, and cried bitterly. "My dear Lucie," said grandmother, "our sweet Aline is now beyond the reach of shells. No harm can touch her any more." It rang as the voice of God, telling my doubtful, wavering heart that all His dealings are love ; therefore He has so early removed her from us and every hurt, and taken her up in His fold. It was like comfort. I felt

quieted: the storm had passed away. I went up to the door and unlatched it. I felt the effort to be great; both my hands fell wearily at my sides, and I leant against the massive door to keep it open. When uncle Jean emerged from the darkness of the cellar, with his lifeless burden in his arms, he stopped a moment on the threshold. The sun shone full in her face—her lovely, beautiful face—looking so heavenly, with the fairness of death upon it. Strips of light caught her long soft hair which had fallen loose, and rippled it over with sunny gold. I raised my eyes to his set features, and beheld a sadness which cut me to the heart. And then came a heavy footfall upon the stone steps, and overhead I heard the slamming of a door.

September the 27th, 1870.

Woe unto us! The painful sequel of our suffering has at last arrived. . . . Many were the hours we had spent alone, grandmother and I, before the white empty bed, with its deep moulded pillow. I could not speak of comfort—my tremulous voice would have misgiven me. With Aline's

last bidding still lingering in my ear, to love grandmother for us both when she was gone, I felt sorry that it was sin to wish for death, and I tried to pray. . . . Suddenly there came a rush to our cellar-door,—it flung open, creaking on its hinges. Uncle Jean leaped in, breaking the stillness of the dead with an agonizing cry. “All is lost! Strasbourg has surrendered!” And then followed a scene too painful to be told. Grandmother had risen, and stood erect in the middle of the cellar, seeming to grow taller and taller, her silver locks streaming from beneath the white cap, her set lips blanched and trembling with suppressed emotion, her hands clasped as if in prayer, a wild fire gleaming in her tearless eyes. I could have gazed for ever at this new apparition of our sweet gentle grandmother, so beautiful in her woe, so appealing and formidable in the anguish of her soul; but sobs, heart-rending sobs, made me turn towards uncle Jean. He was crouching on the floor, his face buried in his hands, hot burning tears stealing along his fingers. Oh! the agony of grief to see a man weep: to see his stalwart frame crushed underneath the heavy strokes of Fate: to hear the deep sighs tearing up his breast! And the man was

uncle Jean—he for whom I am willing to shed my heart's-blood. I could not bear it. A yearning after the open air, after any kind of action, after sunshine and freedom, thrilled through my whole being, and I turned away from them and left the cellar. When my eyes looked up towards Heaven, I saw that it was true. The noise of heavy guns had ceased, and high up against the twilight of our sombre cathedral, which looked like an immense hearse, I beheld the white flag! I understood why all of a sudden our personal grief, our anguish and sorrow, crumbled away before the magnitude of a nameless calamity, heavier still and more fearful than blighted hopes, sundered ties, fire and death. . . .

And yet the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. Oh, Lord Almighty, remember us still!

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